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ABSTRACT

As part of the Federally sponsored School Program Advancing Career Education (SPACE) in the schools of Greeneville and Greene County, Tennessee, an inventory of teacher attitudes toward career education was conducted to aid in assessing a 45-percent dropout rate in the country. An 18-statement questionnaire was administered to 81 city teachers in four elementary schools and 81 county teachers in six elementary schools and one secondary school. City and county teachers were in complete agreement regarding work values, student attitudes, student ability to get along with people, and familiarity with many different careers. Moreover, there was agreement concerning use of resource people, study of student interests and abilities, relating instruction to career development, and opportunities for vocational skills and work experience. While 75 percent of both groups agreed that the school should prepare all students for careers and assist them in making career decisions, only 50 percent felt the schools should place all graduates in jobs or postsecondary institutions. City teachers were more favorable than county teachers toward guidance and counseling for career development, student followup after graduation, work-related and hands-on experiences for teachers, and student work-study arrangements. (EA)

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ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS TOWARD CAREER EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

Greeneville and Greene County Schools, Tennessee joined in the School Program Advancing Career Education (SPACE) to develop a comprehensive program, grades 7 through 12. The planning phase, in progress from January to October, 1973 under Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, involved approximately 3,500 students and 130 administrators and teachers in nine pilot schools.

Greene County, overflowing with natural resources, was rapidly becoming industrialized. However, a 45-percent school dropout rate existed in the rural population of 48,000 persons. With the advent of a new vocational facility, it was anticipated that the dropout rate would gradually decline. However, it was evident that attitudes toward vocational training and career education must be favorable to achieve the greatest benefit from the planned program. For this reason, an 18-statement questionnaire was administered in city and county schools to determine the attitudes of teachers toward career education.

THE PROBLEM

In order to conduct an effective career education program, it is imperative that teachers favor the concepts of career education. Therefore, teacher attitudes must be determined so that efforts can be made to improve attitudes where necessary for effective program implementation.

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OBJECTIVES

The following objectives were determined for the study:

1. To determine attitudes of city and county teachers toward career education;
2. To identify those career education concepts considered favorable by city and county teachers;
3. To identify those career education concepts considered unfavorable by city and county teachers; and
4. To develop strategies for changing those attitudes toward career education which are likely to be detrimental to implementing the proposed program.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The high dropout rate in Greene County made it imperative to find new methods for maintaining student interest in school. Without adequate educational preparation in today's world of accelerating technology and changing occupations, students lack the ability to pursue and advance in careers. If students are to be stimulated to complete their education, teaching skills must improve. Innovations targeting towards gaining information and insight about careers must replace traditional methods. In addition, students must have opportunities to explore careers of their choice and acquire knowledge and skills preparatory to entering employment.

However, before implementing the proposed program, teachers must first understand career education, become committed to it, involved in it, and propelled by it. Pursuant to initiating strategies to accomplish these objectives, prevailing attitudes concerning career education must be determined. After pinpointing those attitudes which are likely to prove unfavorable, ways can be found to alter them.

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ASSUMPTIONS

The following assumptions were made in regard to this study:

1. Career education offers promise as a solution to many of the problems encountered in today's schools.
2. All teachers do not accept the concepts of career education.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

Four elementary schools in the city and six elementary schools and one high school in Greene County were involved in the study. The following limitations applied:

1. The instructions and questions in the attitudinal questionnaire may possibly have been interpreted in different ways by respondents.
2. Career education programs were new and, therefore, experience in this area was limited in the year 1973.

METHODOLOGY

Career education was defined as a comprehensive educational program focusing on careers, beginning in grade one or earlier and continuing through life. Achieving the most satisfying life and work style possible was considered to be the goal of career education.

Eighteen statements from a 20-statement questionnaire were used as the attitudinal questionnaire. The original instrument was administered to determine career education attitudes in a 1973 study involving 65 administrators and 332 teachers in career education programs over the nation.[1] Two statements related to coping with the economic world and using leisure time were eliminated from the original questionnaire because the focus of the planned program was primarily on career development.

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[1]Genevieve D. Smith, "Career Education In-Service Guidelines for Educational Administrators." (Ed.D. dissertation, The University of Tennessee. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1973.)

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A four-point scale was used. This Degree of Participation scale contained the following: Very Much (4 points); Much (3 points); Some (2 points); and Little or None (1 point). Frequencies, percentages, means, modes, medians, and ranges were determined.

FINDINGS

The questionnaire was administered to 81 city teachers in four elementary schools and to 81 county teachers in six elementary schools and one secondary school. These schools included Tusculum View, Highland, Eastview, Andrew Johnson in the city and Greystone, Sunnyside, St. James, Camp Creek, Cedar Creek, Debusk, and South Greene in the county. There was 100 percent response.

City teachers had an average of 15.4 years of teaching experience and .7 years of occupational experience. The majority of the teachers (87 percent) held bachelor's degrees while 13 percent had master's degrees.

County teachers averaged 12.1 years of teaching experience and 3.3 years of occupational experience. In the group, 79 percent had bachelor's degrees, 16 percent held master's degrees, and 5 percent were non-degree teachers.

Similar Attitudes

City and county teachers were in complete agreement (100 percent) with the following statements:

Teachers should appreciate the values of many types of work.

Teachers should help students develop attitudes necessary for career advancement.

Teachers should help students develop the ability to get along with people.

Students should become familiar with many different careers.

Both groups were in almost total agreement on these statements:

The school should use parents, employers, and community for sources of learning.

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Teachers should relate instruction to career development.

Students should learn the values of work from kindergarten through high school.

Students should study their interests and abilities to determine their fitness for specific careers.

Students should have the opportunity to learn vocational skills.

Students should have the opportunity for work experience.

Over 75 percent of both groups also agreed that the school should prepare all students for careers and help students to make decisions about careers. However, only 50 percent of city and county teachers agreed that the school should place all graduates in jobs or in post-secondary institutions for additional career preparation.

Differing Attitudes

While 100 percent of the city teachers stated that the school should provide guidance and counseling for career development, 32 percent of the county staff disagreed. City teachers were also more favorable toward student follow-up after graduation; 82 percent were in strong agreement as opposed to 59 percent of the county group.

The majority (93 percent) of the city staff favored work-related experience for teachers to increase understanding about careers. However, only 51 percent of the county staff were positive about teachers acquiring hands-on experience.

Three-fourths of the city group considered themselves highly accountable for career development and favored students having free choice to leave school and return later to complete their education. However, one-half of the county staff disagreed with these statements.

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CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions are based upon an interpretation of the data gathered in this study:

1. City teachers are more positive than county teachers toward the concepts of career education.

2. Both groups are very positive regarding instruction related to careers and involving the total community.

3. Career guidance and counseling in the school receives high favor from city teachers who have had this service for a number of years. However, county teachers, who have had limited exposure to guidance and counseling services, are not as favorable.

4. City and county teachers consider the school highly responsible for career development. However, they are considerably less positive about teachers being responsible for career development.

5. Approximately one-half of both groups agree that the school should provide a placement program.

6. City teachers are more positive about following the progress of students after graduation.

7. City and county teachers are favorable toward providing opportunities for career exploration and preparation and developing attitudes conducive to career advancement

8. County teachers are less positive than city teachers about students having free choice to leave school and return later to complete their education.

9. County teachers, who have almost five times as much work experience as city teachers, are more oriented to occupations.

10. County teachers are much less positive than city teachers about acquiring work experience to increase their understanding of careers.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations are made as a result of this study:

1. A career guidance counselor should be added to the county staff. This person should be able to relate well to teachers as well as students and be influential in developing favorable attitudes toward this part of the program.

2. Through appropriately designed in-service activities, county teachers should be influenced toward acceptance of career guidance and counseling as a vital component of the school program.

3. Those responsible for the in-service program should search for ways to gain greater teacher commitment to the career development of students. Involvement of students in planning career-related activities is likely to influence staff in this direction.

4. Planning should begin to implement a placement program which assists students in finding part-time or full-time employment according to their needs and desires. Teachers and students should work cooperatively with administrators and employers in developing this program. Such experience will enable the staff to understand and appreciate the importance of placing students in employment that is suited to their qualifications and needs.

5. Another focus of the in-service program should be on the importance of student follow-up. If teachers are aware of the status of students after graduation, especially those who find themselves unprepared to enter any kind of employment, they are likely to become more committed to assisting students in career development.

6. Special efforts should be made to provide opportunities for students who have left school prematurely to return to complete their education. The in-service program should stress the importance of assisting these early leavers to finish high school so that they can pursue a career of their choice.

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It is essential that teachers be educated to the fact that students who are not able to follow a career become burdens to themselves and to society.

7. Teachers should be encouraged to acquire some occupational experience during the summer months so that they better understand the world of work. The possibility of providing additional salary credit for such experience should be thoroughly explored.

8. Hands-on experiences that provide greater insight about careers and the relation between school and occupations should be included as a regular part of the in-service program.

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SUMMARY OF RESULTS OF 162 TEACHERS

RESPONDING TO THE TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARD CAREER EDUCATION SURVEY

Item	Question	City Teachers Percentage Yes	City Teachers Percentage No	County Teachers Percentage Yes	County Teachers Percentage No
	THE SCHOOL SHOULD--				
1.	prepare all students for careers.	88	12	100	
2.	provide all students with guidance and counseling for career development.	100		68	32
3.	use parents, employers, and community for sources of learning.	99	1	100	
4.	place all graduates in jobs or post-secondary schools.	55	45	53	47
5.	follow the student's progress after he leaves.	82	18	59	41
	TEACHERS SHOULD--				
6.	appreciate the values of many types of work.	100		100	
7.	have work-related experiences to increase their understanding of careers	93	7	51	49
8.	relate instruction to career development.	100		93	7
9.	help students develop attitudes necessary for career advancement.	100		100	
10.	help students develop the ability to get along with people.	100		100	
11.	help students to make decisions about careers.	94	6	78	22
12.	be accountable for career development.	69	31	50	50

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SUMMARY OF RESULTS OF 162 TEACHERS

RESPONDING TO THE TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARD CAREER EDUCATION SURVEY

Item	Question	City Teachers Percentage Yes	City Teachers Percentage No	County Teachers Percentage Yes	County Teachers Percentage No
	STUDENTS SHOULD--				
13.	learn the values of work from kindergarten through high school.	99	1	99	1
14.	become familiar with many different careers.	100		100	
15.	study their interests and abilities to determine their fitness for specific careers.	94	6	99	1
16.	have the opportunity to learn vocational skills.	100		92	8
17.	have the opportunity for work experience.	100		99	1
[illegible].	have free choice to leave school and return for further education.	75	25	53	47